

AN error by former Wycombe Wanderers second choice goalkeeper Kevin Raine, gave the Rothmans Isthmian League champions three points on Saturday. But this match, which had all the semblances of the F.A. Cup bore at Marlow last week, is best forgotten.

For the second time this season, Wanderers were unable to raise their standards against weak opposition, for make no mistake, Walton were a decidedly poor outfit. The Blues did not work hard enough at the game and once they realised they were the superior outfit, seemed to drop down to their opponents' level.

It was all so different to the cracker at Leatherhead on Tuesday. Gone was the fighting spirit, the fine inter-passing and enthusiasm. Instead we saw countless errors and a thoroughly frustrating 90 minutes football. To make matters worse, Wycombe had their first player booked this

season. Terry Reardon for deliberate hand ball. The Blues lost only one penalty point from the sportsmanship pool last term when Dave Bullock had his name taken — and that was in the very late stages of the season. Reardon, a trifle unfortunate to be punished on Satur-

players and spectators.

The days when Wycombe fans would relish the visit of Walton and Hersham to Loakes Park now seem to be over. Manager Allen Batsford left the club in the close season and took with him several class players. Only Russell Perkins remained from

Wycombe W. 1, Walton and H. 0

Report by STUART EARP

day, was also booked last year in the Berks and Bucks Senior Cup at Chesham.

It seems referees this year are not being so lenient. Only three clubs have yet to concede penalty points now, while Clapton have amassed a staggering 10 bookings already. In mentioning referees, it would also appear the standard of refereeing has gone down considerably. Once again, we saw the man in the middle make some extraordinary decisions on Saturday which again frustrated both

last term and the replacements looked woefully short of experience and Isthmian league ability. Saturday's team was just a ghost of the Walton sides of the past.

Against such opposition, Wycombe really should have rattled up their 'goals for' tally and secured their first £40 bonus. They have yet to score more than two goals in a league game so far.

Only a couple of players really produced anything like their top form. Gary Hand, the left back,

had an excellent match both in defence and linking well with the front runners. I thought Terry Reardon was also impressive and played some delightful balls through Walton's defence. But the rest of the players will want to get this game behind them.

Walton turned out without Dave Alexander, who was expected to sign on with Raine in midweek. They began well, running purposefully and Keith Mead had to head high over his own goal after only five minutes after a neat attack.

Mick Holifield went close at the other end before Reardon went into the book in the 14th minute. Referee Patten had no doubts the handling was deliberate, many thought otherwise.

The atmosphere even in these early stages was strangely quiet. There were only ripples of applause from the crowd and the famous chanting from behind the goal was never heard.

Phillips, up for a free kick, forced Raine to dive at his feet after 20 minutes and four minutes later Holifield sent in a crashing volley which flew off the crossbar and over the top. Five corners were won by the Blues in the opening 25 minutes — two of them were wasted with the ball going behind the line.

The half grew more and more frustrating. Lack of concentration by Dave Bullock saw several of his passes sail right out of play but fortunately for Wycombe, Walton could take no advantage. Their early running petered out and this presented Wanderers with more time to attack. They too, failed to capitalise.

Two attacks late in the half at least promised a better showing after the break. Keith Scarle headed down and just wide, then Raine pulled off the best save of the match in the 44th minute.

Kennedy spotted Holifield clear of the defence and laid the ball onto his favourite left foot. Mick took a couple of paces and then lashed the ball towards the net. Raine, well positioned, got a hand to the drive and turned it round the post.

The strange atmosphere of the first half continued in the second as the play once more failed to reach a reasonable standard. Once again the distribution from the defence was poor, Mead being one of the main offenders in the second period.

In a bid to break through, Wycombe brought on their leading goalscorer Tony Horseman after 11 minutes of the half. He replaced Steve Perrin who was rarely seen in the game.

Walton's closest effort came on the hour when Dave Allen and Mead chased a ball through the home defence. As John Maskell came out all three collided, but the ball stayed in the heap of players.

Then, with 63 minutes gone, Wanderers took the lead. Predictably it was a mistake that led to the goal. Reardon played a short free kick to Hand who drove in hard and low. Raine had the ball covered and in his grasp when he suddenly let it slip from his hands. Horseman was right on the spot and slotted the loose ball home for his easiest goal of the season.

Raine is always likely to make the occasional mistake and it was notable that he had a man marking him from most goal kicks. He had looked sound until the point, however, and was unfortunate to pay the full price for just one error.

Soon afterwards Holifield ran half the length of the field but ballooned the ball high into the crowd while at the other end Bullock's timely tackle robbed Perkins of his one and only shot at goal throughout the 90 minutes. Reardon once found himself a yard in front of the visitors' defence in his own half but his lack of pace allowed Dick Sullan to race back and tackle.

Raine received the biggest cheer of the afternoon when he headed the ball out of play in the 80th minute when out of his area but the lack of teamwork and cohesion in the Wycombe side continued to plague the game. No doubt the final whistle was a welcome relief to all concerned.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; K. Mead, A. Phillips, D. Bullock, G. Hand; H. Kennedy, T. Reardon, M. Holifield; D. Evans, K. Scarle, S. Perrin (sub A. Horseman 56 mins).

WALTON: K. Raine; P. Betson, R. Sullan, M. James, P. Jarratt; S. Baker (sub P. Linsley 71 mins), D. Allen, J. Cook; G. Borthwick, R. Perkins, R. Mumford.

Referee: D. Patten (Yately).

Half-time: 0-0. **Goalscorer,** Wycombe - Horseman (63).

Official paying attendance: 1,217.

Approximate total attendance: 1,500.



Paddy Betson (2) is beaten in the air by Wycombe's Dylan Evans during the Blues' 1-0 victory at Loakes Park against Walton.